

From: Harry Bardal
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/11/02 3:35pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Madam

I have watched the Microsoft antitrust trial with great interest. As a Canadian citizen I have been somewhat frustrated at my governments reluctance to act on what I believe to be Microsoft's anticompetitive practices. The ball seems to be in the court of the American justice system and my hope is that a fair remedy is found. I have used Microsoft's products and continue to, many are useful business tools. I do feel however that their business practices have been predatory and unfair to smaller businesses trying to compete in an already cutthroat industry. Although Microsoft succeeds in establishing standards that channel and consolidate computer usage and facilitate communication, the standards always proprietary and always seem to be vertically integrated with other Microsoft products. Perhaps more regrettably, these standards are often substandard. A phrase heard often in my area of business is "Microsoft Lock-in" It refers to the inability to use third party software in concert with Microsoft products. This combined with real virus problems and rather egregious security flaws makes many Microsoft products a necessary evil for many people even in the face of superior competing products.

I have seen some intelligent, well designed software try to compete with the Microsoft dominance and fail. Microsoft has expressed it needs to be allowed to innovate. Few Microsoft are truly innovative or remarkable and yet Microsoft's practices have quelled or absorbed other companies that have innovated. The technology sector has been a driving force in the American economy and by extension the Canadian economy and it deserves some scrutiny.

I believe that personal computers are the single most important tool of our age. They are the first example of true multi-use and not single-use technology. Many companies will have something to offer as the industry matures. I hope these companies might dare to innovate, compete and contribute to the Microsoft line of operating systems as well as Linux, Mac OS, Unix and dozens of other variants. I hope that this is allowed to flourish in a atmosphere of fair competition.

regards

Harry Bardal
Vancouver, BC

